

Public Meeting At Big Bear

June 9, 2006

In attendance: Dave McNamee, Craig McNamee, Bob Imhoff, Darwin Hintz, Randy Alf, Carolyn Mealman, Sandra & Dale Lehman, Nancy & Chuck Sorensen, Diane Stowell, Judy Freeman, Jim Halvorson, Mark Schmidt, Chuck Norgren, Heidi Brunkow, Phyllis & Al TePaske, Dean Schultis, Gene & Ester Johnson

- 2006 Timber Sales – We will have a timber sale bid opening in July. We discussed forest certification, allowable cut, reforestation & forest inventory
- Enforcement problems on the forest dealing mainly with communications
- State forest roads- mowing & special projects to repair & maintain existing forest roads & trails
- Discussion & comments on proposed FRSF Access Plan and Master Planning (see comments below). We hope to come up with a rough draft plan based on comments & ideas at this meeting and come back together in 1-2 months for more discussion & planning on drafted plan.
- Forest Protection – The forest will have 5-6 surveyors to study invasive species in the forest. They will be focusing mainly on the campgrounds, trails, river and recreation sites. Some concerns are the Emerald Ash Borer, Garlic Mustard and the Gypsy Moth.
- Multiple Use & Ecosystem-based Projects – we now have soil maps available for the property.
- ATV – There will be ongoing trail repair projects throughout the summer on existing ATV trail from Mason Creek to Co. Rd. W (gravel with pit run).
- Recreation - There may be 2-3 electrical sites placed at Connors Lake campground somewhere in the future in the handicapped sites.
 - We are looking into relocating the Lake of the Pines Boat Landing and possibly making the current boat landing a group campsite.
 - We will be doing a river survey over the summer months with the dates set to imitate the flight survey done in 1986. The survey results will hopefully help us determine current river use.
 - There was discussion on Mason Lake access. Current access is through the Hines property. Discussed possible public access options. There has not been any record of stocking fish on this lake.
- There are several funded projects currently on the forest
 - ATV Trail Repair
 - Repair River Recreation Roads
 - Repair Forks Road
 - Culvert Repair/Erosion Control
 - Replace Lake of the Pines Well
 - Repair Nedli/ATV Trail
 - Repair Powerline Road
 - ATV Bridge Repair
 - Hacket Creek Bridge (replace culverts)
 - Forest Road Maintenance

Minutes, Road Access Plan Flambeau River State Forest

Issue: Access plans are an integral part of any forest plan. Recently the Forest Certification process has addressed the need to focus on opportunities for enhancing the overall level of maintenance on the state forest road network (FSC CAR 2004.4 & SFI CAR 5). In addition, the Wisconsin Forestry Best Management Practices for water quality identifies the proper construction and maintenance of roads for forest management activities.

We have done a good job in construction of temporary roads for management purposes. The problem arises however when these roads go beyond their intended design and become in many cases all season roads for the purpose of recreational use. This use has created a number of concerns to the public and land managers.

When reacting to these issues it is necessary for individual forests to develop access plans. The direction each of us may go is dependent on a number of factors. Flambeau River State Forest (FRSF) is in the process of developing their access plan.

BACKGROUND:

Management of the Flambeau River State Forest has always leaned toward providing and maintaining a remote, wild forest. The forest is a little more than 90,000 acres. It provides for an active timber management program, river recreation opportunities, camping, picnicking, snowmobiling, ATV, hiking, hunting, fishing, and many other activities a large forest can offer. Approximately 500 miles of both improved and unimproved roads exist on the forest due to past management activities. This equates to a road density of approximately 2 miles of roads for every square mile of forest. This excessive mileage along with the high expense associated with maintenance necessitated the review of our existing open road policy. These roads are built in most cases on silt to sandy loam soils and were never intended to be all season roads.

INVENTORY:

Inventory of the existing road system is nearly complete. The inventory has identified the location and condition of our road system. All data has been entered and is maintained on the FRSF GIS system.

SOCIAL ISSUES:

It is anticipated that the road access plan will have impacts on a number of users. Attempts have been made to include all interested partners. Informational letters have been sent to approximately 90 hunting camps, local businesses (Oxbo Resort, Flambeau Forest Inn, Hayward Chamber of Commerce, Ladysmith Chamber of Commerce, Big Bear Lodge, Flambeau Forest Resort, Nine Mile Resort, Winter Chamber of Commerce, Flambeau Adventures Flambeau River Lodge, Park Falls Chamber of Commerce, The Cabin, and Boyds Mason Lake Resort). In addition, notice of the public meeting was placed in the Sawyer County Record, The Bee, Park Falls Herald and the Ladysmith News. A notice was also placed on the local TV informational Channel 6.

A public hearing was held on June 9, 2006. At this meeting a number of issues were addressed and included:

- Defining the problem and future direction of access within the Flambeau State Forest.
- Arrive at consensus for a road density/sq. mi.
- Identify local issues of concern. Received comments are listed:
 - Mark roads that should or cannot be accessed
 - If not all-seasoned, it should be gated and a sign placed
 - Low density of maintained roads
 - Access to all current areas
 - Maintain dead end or loop roads (not used) with gates
 - Roads open should be based on usage
 - What dictates road closure
 - Cut off all dead end with more than 1 x
 - A road density of no less than 2 miles
 - Road density at 2 miles apart would be sufficient
 - ½ mile density should give adequate access
 - Density should be 1 mile
 - Move towards ¼ to ½ mile density
 - Access roads should be closed within ¼ mile of the Flambeau River
 - Additional access to the river
 - If you do not want a wilderness experience go hunt on a game farm
 - Preserve the wilderness experience
 - Will there be road less areas?
 - Increased road density is associated with decreased hunting experience
 - Remove wildlife openings
 - Opening areas after dark to retrieve game
 - Have special areas for handicapped persons to use by permit
 - Post signs closing roads during certain times of the year to protect road
 - Lack of enforcement
 - Fire control issues
 - Private withholding access
 - What is DNR's responsibility to protect private land
 - Gate placement
 - Advertise meeting in outdoor news
 - Other closed roads should be properly rehab to control erosion prior to closing.
 - Create proper turn around prior to road closure
 - Provide additional parking off open roads
 - Eliminate parking in ditches
 - Provide access finger roads off Nedli toward river
 - Maintain improved access to private land if road is left open
 - Access to private land should be open to the public, gates should be placed at the property boundary
 - No special treatment should be given to private in holdings. All tax payers should be treated equally.

SUMMARY

In general, the access plan has been looked on favorably. The majority of the respondents wish to keep the Flambeau River State Forest maintained as a remote, wild forest. Recommended future road densities varied from closing all roads to leaving all roads open. A compromise was promoted to create an improved road access every 2 miles, along with maintaining scattered limited access areas throughout the forest. Proposed plans (maps) for open and closed roads based on comments received will be listed on the Flambeau River State Forest Web site:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/forestry/StateForests/SF-Flambeau/>

A hard copy is available by contacting our office at 715/332/5271 ext. 101. If you were unable to provide input from previous meetings and wish to do so, you may at this time. Please send comments to:

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IMPLEMENTATION:

Road upgrade

Once we have identified what existing roads will be open, upgrades will be planned along with road closures. The fiscal impact of this is uncertain, however based on past road improvements on the Flambeau River State Forest, to upgrade forest roads to all season status the cost is approximately \$20,000/mi.

Road maintenance

Of the roads upgraded, annual maintenance will be required. This will be in the form of grading, culvert maintenance, and brushing. In addition a certain percentage of gated, bermed interior trails will need periodic mowing and clearing of down material. The reason for the maintenance of interior trails stems from the identified needs for the public to access closed areas for hunting, and in particular to facilitate the use of non-motorized deer hauling carts.